UNITED
NATIONS

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Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/Sub.2/1999/NGO/6
24 June 1999

Original: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sub-Commission on Prevention of
Discrimination and Protection
of Minorities
Fifty-first session
Item 8 of the provisional agenda

PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST AND THE PROTECTION OF MINORITIES

Written statement submitted by the International Human Rights Association of American Minorities, a non-governmental organization on the Roster

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[6 June 1999]

GE.99-13850 (E)

1. Under the present conditions of world affairs as they concern protection of ethnic minorities, IHRAAM wishes to call attention to the situation of forced assimilation as it relates to African Americans, Native Americans and other national minorities in the United States, and to recent findings of a scientific survey of opinion in this regard in one of the American minority communities, the African-American community.

2. While the problem of ethnic oppression in the United States, unlike that in Kosovo, Nigeria, Tibet, Rwanda, India, etc., cannot credibly be said to pose a problem to international peace, it clearly poses an unbearable burden for the peace and security of the minorities concerned, and thereby to that of the United States itself. Previous IHRAAM communications to the Sub-Commission have addressed in detail the extent of disproportionality between the well-being of American national minorities and that of the dominant group, as well as their need to be recognized as national minorities for the purposes of international protection.

3. In the United States and other States in the western hemisphere, policies of forced assimilation act to create and maintain systemic and institutional discrimination against minorities under the cover of aiding their development and unity with other citizens. This has resulted in the creation of conditions that make it almost impossible for the majority to understand or process the unique needs and demands of the minorities, or for the minorities to understand or construct their unique needs in a way that permits these unique demands and needs to be expressed within the context of the search for democracy and human rights; a form of consociated development leading to fusion or equal status coexistence.

4. The solution to the minority crisis as it is presently occurring in the United States and other such majoritarian multinational States will require the United Nations to address its attention to the policies that foster forced assimilation, particularly in those States which claim to provide a democratic model for human rights protection and development. Clearly, the model of the United States, which has sought to address minority problems solely through the extension of civil rights - non-discrimination, equality before the law, the right to vote, etc., within the context of forced assimilation - has been proved inadequate by a wide array of measurements of the well-being of its national minority communities. Also, United States promotion of policies of forced assimilation on the global level may have contributed to the rash of minority-majority conflicts that presently plague world peace and development. The efforts of certain States to institute policies of forced assimilation is probably a major cause of discrimination against and devaluation of national minorities.

5. In order to measure the degree of satisfaction of one such minority with current official policies of civil rights/non-discrimination within the context of forced assimilation, the IHRAAM undertook a National Survey on Human Rights, which polled the attitudes of African Americans on a number of key questions relevant to their situation as a minority in order to ascertain their views. The findings of this recent survey - perhaps the first of its kind - are attached hereto. Further information on the scientific parameters established for the conduct of the survey, and on its results, is available on the IHRAAM Website at http://www.ihraam.org.

6. As this summary clearly indicates, African Americans conceive of themselves as a recognized minority with individual and collective human rights. Thus, the insistence by the majority in the United States to use the United States Government and all societal institutions to foster a policy of forced assimilation in relation to African Americans is clearly a violation of this minority's human rights and a continuation of the pattern of gross violation of their human rights which the United States Government has pursued in its historic official policies of enslavement, segregation, etc., as has been brought to the attention of the Sub-Commission by IHRAAM in its petitions under the 1503 procedure in 1993 and 1995.

7. IHRAAM therefore requests the cooperation of the United Nations in setting up discussions or conferences at the international level on the subject of forced assimilation in general, and on the situation of the African Americans and the right to self-determination as it may apply to them, with special attention, at minimum, to their right to an apology from the United States Government for the enslavement of their African ancestors.

8. Perhaps if international attention by the United Nations Sub-Commission to minority distress caused by forced assimilation had not been overlooked at an earlier stage, then the violent conflicts in the Balkans and elsewhere could have been avoided by creating a developmental model that would better enable all the stakeholders to better understand that processes of forced assimilation are a fundamental cause of minority conflict which clearly pose a threat to global peace and security.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL SURVEY ON HUMAN RIGHTS

1. What is your Zip Code #? _____

2. Are you a native-born American citizen? Yes 88% No 12%

   If "No", note country of birth _____

3. Are you a registered voter? Yes 91% No 9% Uncertain ____

4. What is your gender? Male 38% Female 62%

5. What is the highest grade you completed in school? _____

6. What is your age range?

A.	18-25	4%
B.	26-35	14%
C.	36-49	25%
D.	50-64	25%
E.	65 and over	32%

7. How would you describe most of the people who live in your neighbourhood?

A.	Blue collar/working class people	78%
B.	White collar/professional class people	22%

8. How would you identify your racial or ethnic grouping?

A.	African-American	80%	D.	Latino-American	3%
B.	Asian-American	2%	E.	Native-American	3%
C.	European-American	6%	F.	Other (identify)	6%

9. Do you believe that problems of racial inequality exist in American society?

   Yes 90% No 6% Uncertain 4%

   If "yes", to what degree do you feel such inequality exists?

A.	Significant degree	48%
B.	Moderate degree	42%
C.	Very mild degree	10%

10. Did you know that the United Nations, under international law, provides national and ethnic minorities with the right to exercise local control over the institutions, services and taxes of their communities?

    Yes 28% No 49% Uncertain 22%

11. Do you believe that in certain instances African Americans have the right to be treated as a "collective body", and not just as "individuals", in the attempt to address their common problems and needs?

Yes 69% No 16% Uncertain 15%

12. If presented with the opportunity, should African-American voters participate in an independent election to create a "National Assembly" to help monitor and represent their own collective interests?

Yes 63% No 22% Uncertain 15%

13. Would you be in favour of African Americans having some degree of independent control over those institutions and services that most directly affect their own communities?

Yes 76% No 14% Uncertain 10%

14. How would you describe your level of satisfaction with the overall quality and direction of today's African-American leadership?

A. Very satisfied 8%
B. Somewhat satisfied 47%
C. Somewhat dissatisfied 34%
D. Very dissatisfied 12%

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